

knew that we had kept the recording—not even Don Gerónimo knew that, and Don Benjemino was too hostile to care—he was simply afraid that this time we might catch some of it.

Homage to Aurelio at Carnivál Time

Despite the cold, the evening 'paseos' never slackened through January, February or March. From eight o'clock until half past ten, every evening, the streets would be almost impassible to anyone in a hurry. The men and, above all, youths would drift slowly along in groups of five or six or more, looking at the lines of girls, arm in arm, walking past with their magnificent swinging stride—which in Cádiz, above all the cities of Europe, has been cultivated into a high craft. Sometimes the groups would stop and talk, laugh, giggle, proceed together for a few yards, and then break apart with waves and cries. During an evening's stroll down the Calle Ancha* one would usually encounter the same line of girls walking up or down the street at least six times. Then, their territory exhausted, they would go off to the Plaza de las Minas or the Calle Columella (named after the Latin poet). It was rather like going to a ball every night, without the fatigues of dressing and dancing. At Carnival the streets began to fill with small processions ('chirigótas') of people dressed as harlequins, minstrels with tall silver hats, horse-guards, musketeers, bears and penguins, playing bugles, pipes, drums, bandurrias and mandolins. The 'Tunas', with their black leggings, soft shoes, long black cloaks flowing and coloured ribbons, reappeared, their leaders making their extraordinary jumps into the air. Then carts, painted like houses, boats, trains, castles, appeared in the squares and at street crossings. Standing in them, choruses of harlequins, minstrels, horse-guards, musketeers, bears and penguins sang the Tanguillos. The subjects, all sung to the same rhythm but with different tunes, dealt with every subject under the sun—football matches, domestic scandals, municipal proceedings, newspaper reports, weather, diseases, absurd happenings, accidents, marriages, betrothals, betrayals, state occasions, shipping news, the habits of fish, changes of fashion, prophecies, art exhibitions, bathing, films and the building of the air base at Rota.

Aurelio took me to 'Los Coros', where these Tanguillos were sung by a full choir of nearly fifty men. The hall was packed with standing

people and, in front, crowds of children squatted on the floor. In their midst were some empty chairs for honoured guests. Aurelio sat in one of them and I sat on the floor beside him, amongst the children. The recital lasted for hours. The choir gestured as one man, pointing, holding up a finger, opening the hands, while they unfolded the history of the past year. The audience laughed, whistled or shouted comments as the climaxes of the histories were reached. This year, on account of the State Homage being held in his honour, a longer reference than usual was made to Aurelio, who removed his hat and nodded with a happy smile.

Late one night, on my way home, I saw Efrén's wife, sister-in-law and brother, together with two other women, shivering in the narrow passage that runs beside 'La Privadilla', a bar where the flamencos usually met to find business. They stood in the light of a window, and were listening to a muffled sound of guitar music from within.

'Juerga,' they said, when I asked them what they were doing. They pointed at the window and put their fingers to their lips, for me to be quiet.

'Aurelio, Rosiana and Efrén,' whispered Efrén's wife.

The music sounded more elaborate than anything Efrén ever did, so I asked, 'Who's the other one?'

'The other one? Oh, Algodonales.'

The whirl of notes ceased. Some voice spoke and another guitar began, louder and more brutally rhythmic than the first.

'Efrén!' Efrén's wife said.

We stood there for an hour, hardly speaking—an occasion rare indeed in Andalusia. Two policemen came by, stopped and listened to Aurelio's trumpeting voice as it echoed up between the whitewashed walls and casement windows into the darkness above and passed on without comment. Whatever the rules were about juergas being forbidden after eleven within the walls of the city, they seemed to have been waived for the night.

From time to time they would whisper comments to each other on some technical point of the guitar playing, or repeat the words of the songs as they heard them.

Then suddenly, after the end of a wild and tragic *seguiriya*, we heard the sounds of general conversation, laughter and the scraping of chairs being pulled back. The light went out. I said goodbye to Efrén's family, who were breathing on their hands to get back some warmth, and went round into the bar. There was a large black saloon car standing outside the door, the chauffeur smoking silently at the wheel.

'Hombre! Why didn't you come in and join us?' Aurelio exclaimed,

holding his hands out and pulling me over to introduce me to the business men who had paid for the *juerga*. There were three, all tall, fair-haired and dressed in dark suits. I saw Efrén sitting on a chair in the corner, tucking an envelope into his inside pocket. He got up, and asked me:

'Ha visto Andrés?'

'Andrés?' I said, knowing what was coming but curious to hear what the new rhyme was.

'El que te dió en el barco inglés! (He who "gave it" you in the English boat!)

Efrén went through to the front bar, proclaiming his triumph, but the joke was wearing a bit thin at that time of night.

The three *señoritos* left with courteous good nights and handwaves, and climbed into their car, and we sat down round a marble-topped table. Aurelio asked the barman for cards and when they were brought he began to deal them out, licking his thumb every few moments. The cards somewhat resembled a Tarot pack.

While he was dealing he asked if I had heard the record *Niño Sabicas* had made for him in Havana.

'We'll put it on now,' he said. 'Antonio, could you fix up the record-player so as we can hear?'

Antonio Delgado was the manager of the 'Privadilla'. He was a small, unassuming man with the faintest trace of a stammer, who knew, probably, as much about flamenco as anyone in the world. His assistant, Paco, was a young boy of nineteen, thin, pale-faced and friendly. His greatest pleasure was to sing a 'Taranta', when a guitarist was present after a *juerga*, in the small hours of the morning. This he did hunched forward, his eyes tight shut and his fists clenched in front of him, with all the emotion he could muster. Then he would return to work with renewed energy.

Antonio brought in the record-player, and then there was the long business of trying to find somewhere to plug it in. Eventually, climbing up on a chair, he tied the two bare wires into the socket of the light. We listened to *Sabicas* by the light of candles. At the beginning, *Sabicas* pronounced his dedication in a rather high and rapid voice: 'For Aurelio and all the *afición* of Cádiz!' and proceeded to display his skill as, perhaps, the most brilliant technician flamenco has ever known.

After the record we returned to the cards and tried to divine the future. Soon, however, an argument grew between Aurelio and Serafín de Algodonales. Efrén sat back and said nothing.

Serafín was a pleasant young man who had arrived in Cádiz a week before. He was slim with straight light brown hair; his face was square

and his skin, yellowish, was smooth and drawn tight over large cheekbones. His light blue eyes had the glassy look often found among gypsies, but lacked their colour-flecked, impenetrable quality of surface. He was a devoted follower of Niño Ricardo, and for him the double arpeggio (alternated with a six-note tremolo) was an article of religion. He openly said so.

'With this artistic religion that I have up here'—he tapped his forehead—'I am bound to meet opposition from those whose interests are vested in the past. Ay, with these ideas up here, nothing has comparative importance.'

The technique of dovetailing arpeggios into other techniques was invented, I think, by Ramón Montoya, but it had been carried to fantastic lengths by Niño Ricardo, Escudero and Sabicas, whom most of the young guitarists were sweating blood to emulate.

Niño Ricardo was Serafín's master, worshipped from afar, a sort of hero-figure whose very existence and achievement made his own life worth living.

Aurelio said that Ricardo was an excellent guitarist 'para él'; that is, that while he might be able to pull off these hair-raising tricks without losing feeling, his disciples couldn't, and that all that was left was slickness. Anyway, all this show detracted from the purpose of playing, which was to accompany the singer, first and last.

'But I have my business to look after,' Algodonales said. (Sometimes we called him 'Serafín' and sometimes 'Algodonales', according to how it slipped off the tongue.) 'I can't tell the manager of a company, or an agent in Madrid, that I mustn't play this way because *Aurelio* says he disapproves.'

Aurelio pulled from his pocket Fernando de Triana's book, which I had finally lent him, and found the passage on Ramón Montoya, where it eulogized Montoya not only for his overpowering skill and depth of feeling but for his essential simplicity.

'Simplicity!' Aurelio raised his head and looked at us all. 'Simplicity.' And he shut the book.

Efrén got up to leave, his hands in his pockets. Strangely enough, although Serafín had taken quite a large slice out of Efrén's market (and Efrén was for ever desperately short of money, whatever Aurelio said), I never heard Efrén say a word against him. He must have been secretly irked, though, by the fact that Serafín on his part would often dismiss Efrén's method of playing as too primitive to take seriously. And when people asked Efrén tauntingly why *he* never played double arpeggios and suchlike, all he could do was hold up his hand to show the deep scar on his third finger and say: 'How can I? Anyway, why put in

twenty notes where one is enough?'

He had, however, an even more bitter pill to swallow. Porfirio Díaz de los Reyes detested Efrén because he was secretly afraid of him. He therefore made a point of bringing all his señorito friends into 'La Privadilla' and ostentatiously demanding the services of Serafín de Algodonales.

'Now at last we have a real guitarist,' he would say in a voice loud enough to be heard through the door. Very soon, and thanks to Porfirio, the young and well-off señoritos, whose enjoyment of flamenco was social rather than aesthetic (they liked the sense of power that comes from having people at their beck and call), assumed that Serafín was the best in town, and employed him accordingly.

Efrén's income from the ordinary run of nightly juergas dwindled to practically nothing, and for a while his family were reduced to one meal a day. Whenever Aurelio was employed, however, Efrén had to go along. Aurelio had developed his art to an advanced and difficult level, and Efrén was the only one who knew how to 'carry' him.

'Besides,' Aurelio said, looking round as if he didn't want to be overheard, 'Efrén toca *mejó!* (Efrén plays *better!*)'

'Sí!' responded the other flamencos, 'er toque de Efrén é profundo! (Yes, the playing of Efrén is profound!)

And Efrén, his spirits raised with a wad of much-missed notes in his pocket, would buy a drink and say, 'No hay quien me gana! (I'm unbeatable!)

We talked of Ramón Montoya. His father, a gypsy of Madrid, had been a guitarist, but he had been so cagey and jealous when his son showed a desire to follow in his footsteps that he had refused to teach him anything. As a boy of eight, Ramón had sat outside the door of the Café Cantante* where his father played, night after night, and listened with straining ears. Finally a waiter, moved to compassion, took the little boy into an upstairs room and let him watch the proceedings through a chink in the floor.

'That reminds me of Manolo de Huelva,' said El Chato de la Isla ('The Snub-nose of the Isle'—the 'Isle' being the Island of León, now called the Island of San Fernando). Chato was a tiny man. Lola Flores said of him affectionately that his face was just like a 'rádio pequeñita pequeñita'—a tiny, tiny radio set. Indeed the little radios on sale at that time did rather resemble him, with their square sound-boxes for his mouth and the little button for his nose. 'Manolo went to the guitar-makers in Madrid—Esteso, I think—to test a new guitar they'd made for him. He took the strings off and pulled from his pocket a great bunch

of strings, you never saw such a tangle, and a pair of calipers, and spent all afternoon disentangling strings and measuring them with the calipers, one by one. And when at last he had selected from that tangle of fright a complete set of strings and had put them on the guitar, he told the manager to take him to a room at the end of the passage and give him the key. He posted a boy at the other end of the passage with instructions to raise the alarm if anyone came upstairs. Then he went in and locked the door. Thus he guaranteed that no one was able to listen.'

'Why, for God's sake?' I asked, outraged.

'The Huelvano* is a tocaor who has a style different to everyone else's. Completely different. Have you any idea of the labour he puts into developing his creations, the weeks and months and sometimes years he spends playing one single *falseta* over and over again until it is absolutely perfect, and then working ("sacando"—"pulling") others from it with such richness of invention you wouldn't believe it possible? He is the greatest guitarist in the world, that's without doubt. Now, can you imagine when you have done all that, what your feelings would be to see some third-rate come along and steal what you've perfected after years of labour and play it all over the place and, what is worse, play it badly, and then put in one extra note which does nothing to improve and more likely spoil it, and *then* start boasting it's his own?'

'Manolo de Huelva was playing at a fiesta three weeks ago,' Aurelio said, 'where I was singing for the Marqués de V——. Qué horror! It was unbelievable! I was so hypnotized I forgot to sing. Now, he can muster all the speed in the world—when he wants to.' Aurelio glanced at Algodonales and repeated, 'When he wants to.'

I asked Aurelio what Ramón Montoya had been like as a person. His photograph showed a portly man with a large head and high forehead, rather like a Latin Sibelius, but softened by a faintly Semitic roundness of features.

'He was very nervous,' Aurelio said. 'Nervous, like a priest. Once at a *juerga* at a house in Sevilla—a very important house too, I might add—he started to play a *soleá* of the "aire" of Patiño, and the girls were still fidgeting, as girls always will, and the young men were calling across, "Have you a drink, Juanito?" "Pass me an ashtray, please", "Is your glass full, then?" "Hey, come and sit over here"— and without a word Ramón stopped playing and put his guitar into its case and walked out of the house and he never went there again. The Marqués went personally to Ramón's house to plead with him, but it was no good. And yet they say gypsies will do anything for money.'

It happened that at this time the two English girls left Cádiz

suddenly and without saying goodbye to anyone. One of them, the shy blonde, had been studying the guitar under Pepe Pozoblanco, and then had asked if she could learn from Efrén. She had come with her friend to the Westminster House of Languages, where we had invited Efrén as well, and she began to play a *soleá* on my guitar. As soon as she started, Efrén shook his head in despair, and went on shaking it. This put her off terribly and soon she faltered and stopped.

'No vale ná,' Efrén said. (Not worth nothing.) And that was that.

When they disappeared so mysteriously rumours inevitably began to be repeated by everyone, whether they had known the girls or not. It was said, for instance, that the dark-haired girl ('la morena') had a brother in Cartagena who was a secret Communist; he had been caught photographing the naval base. Others said that 'la morena' had been teaching an officer of the Secret Police. He had made a proposition to her which she had turned down. He had then started enquiries and discovered that her brother had been a member of the Communist Party when a student at Cambridge. People looked at each other knowingly and asked, 'How did he find *that* out, as if we didn't know?' Anyway, here was this brother at Cartagena, a naval base, with a camera, and here was his sister, also with a camera, at Cádiz, another naval base. Really, the risk was too great! Who knew what was going on? None of her friends among the army officers had been able to save her, despite their representations in Madrid. In the end, all three had been given twenty-four hours to leave the country. The girl herself told me, when I saw her once in London, that her mother had been taken ill and had asked her to come home. Her friend had come with her because she had suddenly felt overwhelmingly homesick. Her brother was still in Spain.

The result was that their classes fell vacant, including one at the Artillery Foundry in San Fernando. The moment seemed ripe to leave the Westminster House of Languages, for it was unlikely that I could continue much longer on my present salary. I had not one peseta in reserve in the bank and my clothes were gradually wearing out. I saw Colonel Marín, who said it was essential to continue with the same teacher, and offered me daily classes at eight-thirty in the morning, for fifteen hundred pesetas a month. The Artillery Foundry promised twenty-five hundred a month. A private family offered four hundred a month for classes three times a week. At the school I had been teaching a class at the Chamber of Commerce every evening, and Don Benjemino, when I gave my notice, offered to let me continue with them for five hundred a month. He said he quite understood my position, that it wasn't for him to increase my salary and Campo refused to do so, but that he didn't want to see me left without classes. The Westminster

would close until a new teacher arrived, and he would take a much-needed rest. He wished me the best of luck.

I felt that five hundred pesetas was substantially lower than any of the other classes I gave, considering I had thirty pupils in that one class, and asked one of my students to discover if he could what the Chamber of Commerce had previously paid to the Westminster House of Languages. Two days later he told me that the figure was sixteen hundred pesetas a month, and was still being paid to the school. Meanwhile, I had asked another friend to find out the rent paid by the school for its classrooms. This turned out to be a thousand pesetas a month.

I therefore became worried, for it was clear that I was in fact earning the rent for the Westminster until the new teacher arrived. When that happened there would be nothing to stop Don Benjemino from sending this person to teach the Chamber of Commerce instead of me, and claim, perhaps, the Artillery Foundry classes as well. This would put him into a position to bargain with the Army once more, so that I would be left with nothing but the family, which he could take over when I was forced to leave Cádiz for lack of work.

I announced to the Chamber of Commerce class that evening that I would soon be leaving them.

'Why, Señor Howson?'

'Because I am leaving the "Westminster", and as these classes are arranged by them, they will continue under a new tutor appointed by them.'

'But we should prefer to continue as we are. It is very bad to change a teacher in the middle of a course. One has to reaccustom oneself to a new voice, new idiosyncrasies . . .'

'Well, I'm sorry,' I said. 'Such matters are not for me to decide. Really, the officials of the Chamber of Commerce have the right to arrange their educational facilities according to their own convenience.'

I was banking on one student, Señor Ayamonte. He was a plump, energetic man who owned two restaurants, a hotel and held financial interests of various kinds in the town. He made rather a point of being a plain blunt man of the people, who had earned his wealth by sheer guts and hard work. I suspected he was unable to resist any temptation to exert his influence and in this case, at any rate, I was right.

'That is something that can be arranged,' he said. 'Don't worry, everything will sort itself out.'

I left him a day in which to see the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and plead the case of his fellow-students, and then rang the Secretary myself early next morning, asking for an appointment. He said

any time within the next half-hour.

I rang Don Benjemino and said that five hundred pesetas really was rather low in relation to what I was getting elsewhere, and that therefore I didn't see how I could continue with the classes.

'Don't worry about that,' he said. 'I'll try and get you a bit more. But, of course, this is budgeted by the State, you know. It'll take a bit of time. Would you be willing to carry on for a while until the increase comes through? We could back-date it and give you the balance in a lump sum.'

'How much would the increase be?'

'Well . . .'

Don Benjemino hesitated, as though preparing for a sacrifice. I could almost feel his winks along the line. 'Pués, I think I could raise it to six hundred. If it takes a month to go through, then you'd get a sum of four hundred on top of the salary of five hundred, which would come in very useful to you, verdad?'

'Don't you think I'd better discuss this with the Chamber of Commerce?'

'Don't do that! NO!'

Then Don Benjemino calmed down and said: 'Don't do that. Leave it to me. Come and see me at twelve o'clock. I'll have it all fixed up. Don't worry about it, you'll get a substantial increase. No te apures por eso!'

I put the phone down and went straight round to the Chamber of Commerce building, about two minutes away, and was shown into the Secretary. He sat at a large desk in the Conference Hall. He was middle-aged with a round face, a thin moustache and wore dark sunglasses. There was a clerk sitting on the other side of the desk. I sat beside the Secretary.

I explained the position and expressed surprise that Don Benjemino hadn't yet got in touch with him.

'How much is Don Benjemino paying you?' he asked. He was holding a paper-knife horizontally in front of him, his elbows on the desk, and turning it over and over between the tips of his fingers.

'Five hundred pesetas,' I said.

The knife stopped turning. The Secretary said slowly, 'That's very little.'

Nobody moved. I had the impression that the slightest movement would send them both into peals of laughter.

'And what,' the Secretary asked, still without looking round at me, 'do you think would be a satisfactory fee?'

'Well, my average fee at present for a class of this size is about fifteen hundred pesetas, though in one case I am earning over two thousand.'

'I had a figure in mind more in the region of a thousand,' the Secretary said.

'Supposing, in view of the fact that this is, after all, a State enterprise, I met you more than halfway. In your case, and in your case only, I would accept twelve hundred, on condition that this is strictly in confidence.'

'However not? It is settled, then.'

I was getting more and more anxious lest Don Benjemino should ring.

'Then we start tonight, carrying on as before?' I asked.

'Tonight,' he said. 'I have had most favourable reports from your pupils.'

And for the first time, after our initial greeting, he swung his chair round and looked me in the face, his expression partly curious and partly ironic.

Señor Ayamonte, I thought, with relief. (Perhaps it should be mentioned that Señor Ayamonte had, in fact, asked me if I would play in one of his restaurants for a couple of nights. He calculated, though he was careful not to tell me this, that an Englishman playing the guitar would have a temporary curiosity value and would fill his restaurant during a dull period. There had been no mention of fees and, remembering Aurelio's admonitions, I had decided not to do so. I had, however, been careful not to refuse him in so many words.)

I shook hands with them and left. As I went out I heard the phone ringing. 'Yes?' said the Secretary, 'Ah, Don Benjemino . . .'

There still remained four hundred pesetas of the budget unaccounted for. I hoped and prayed that some of it would find its way to Don Benjemino, to mitigate the blow.

At noon I went guiltily into the school. The spirited defence I had prepared ('Deja de tomarme por inglés!'—'Stop taking me for English!' which is a popular expression meaning to take for a ride) seemed to evaporate as I opened the door.

Don Benjemino was striding up and down the tiled floor, a sheaf of papers in his hand. When he saw me he threw them on to the desk.

'I have never in my life encountered such filthy, such dirty . . .!' Words failed him. He was white and trembling.

'What's the matter?' I asked, with an effort at brightness.

'What do you mean, what's the matter? Where did you learn stinking tricks like that?'

'Look here, you were being paid sixteen hundred and offering me five hundred. Would *you* work for that?'

'No!' Then he remembered himself, and shouted, 'That's got nothing

to do with it!'

'Look, Benjemino, I accepted twelve hundred to leave four hundred for you! For you! How can you say I didn't think of you? Don't you want that?'

'Yes! NO! That's nothing to do with it! Of course I don't want it!'

And so what I had intended to be a majestic denunciation of his chicanery had turned into an undignified squabble. It began to dawn on me, with horror, that he might, after all, be completely innocent. It was like Don Ángel's tape all over again.

We parted without saying goodbye, and henceforth we avoided each other in the street. Occasionally, when I passed his wife, a rather pretty, severe-looking young woman who had always regarded me with the deepest suspicion, she turned her head away in contempt.

During the Carnívál (officially, and rather depressingly, called 'Las Fiestas Típicas Gaditanas') there were two outstanding events: 'La Coronación de La Reina' and the 'State Homage to Aurelio Sellés'.

The Coronation began on a Saturday afternoon, with choruses, 'chirigótas' (the groups dressed in costume, who also sang, played pipes, or performed antics), buglers, band and cavalcades gathering in the Genovese Park and setting off through the city.

The occasion was reported in the newspapers under banner headlines: 'RESULTÓ TRIUNFÁL EL RECORRIDO POR LOS BARRIOS POPULARES'—'THE PROCESSION THROUGH THE POPULAR DISTRICTS RESULTED AS A TRIUMPH.'

'Even the clouds', the report went on, 'showed respect for our gentle and "simpática paisana" ("charming compatriot").' At the prearranged hour she occupied 'a magnificent automobile with lifting roof, a Chevrolet, registration M-334674. With the Festival Sovereign sat the Vice-President of the Fiestas, Don M—— de V——. At the wheel, a lieutenant-colonel of the North American Naval Force, M. K—— D——, of the Hispano-American naval base at Rota, who offered his car and at the same time himself to drive it. A section of the Municipal Police, motorized, opened the march, while components of the University Tuna formed an escort to the vehicle. Behind, the Municipal Police on horseback. Past and present in the Royal Cortège.'

The procession halted outside various houses to pay homage and give presents to the respected occupants. In the district of 'La Viña' (a century ago an entirely Moorish quarter) the cavalcade was greeted by a committee, whose leader made a little speech. However, he was too far back from the procession to be heard.

The report said: 'When we told him to draw nearer to the Cortège he

repeated it from memory. At the moment of truth, however, he knew not what to say. Deeply moved, he confined himself to pronouncing the words: "For the Loveliest and Most Beautiful Queen! Long live Cádiz!" And he gave to her a bunch of flowers, to which was pinned a brooch: an Imperial Eagle, ornamenting the Shield of Cádiz in enamel, and on the reverse, the dedication: "La Viña to the Queen of 1956". A parchment was passed to the hands of the Queen, which occasioned a shout, "Viva la Viña!" straight from the soul of the gathering. All this amidst the gay sound of the rhythms of the Tuna, and a rain of confetti, streamers, and flowers: many flowers.'

Later, in the Barrio de Santa María, 'in the presence of many neighbours—Aurelio Sellés, "La Perla" (The Pearl), "El Chino" (The Chinaman), "El Chaqueta" (The Jacket), the flower and cream of this District, "tan castiza y tan flamenco" (of such caste and so flamenco), and of dignitaries of the City, including Don José-María Pemán, a poem was read to the Queen'.

The report went on: 'It was necessary first to brush away from the eyes of Señorita A—— de la M—— confetti which had clustered there. She, happy and smiling, received the flowers and listened to the poem which the District had dedicated to her. The author, P—— D—— C——, recited it. A beautiful composition. Tears welled up from more than a few pairs of eyes. Men who had weathered and been hardened by a thousand hazards of life discovered that they were profoundly moved by the recitation. The "rasguear" of a guitar served as an adequate base for the words of the poet, who was afterwards congratulated by everybody.'

The procession continued to its reception at the Town Hall in the Plaza San Juan de Díos, in which stood so many of the cafés we frequented at night, and at half past eight the Solemn Ceremony of Coronation began.

First there was delivered a 'Pregón' (which can be anything from a street-cry to a supplication or a public announcement), written and read by an appointed citizen.

The citizen, Don G—— de las F——, began with a salutation to the Queen, which called attention to all the beauties and 'valores' of the city: 'The "Andalucismo" of the fiestas continues, and sustains us, on this stage peopled by ladies of ebony and snow, of marble and mahogany, as it sustained Sinesio Delgado and Victor de la Serna, when were concentrated here not only all Europe, the Europe honoured and mistress of her own house we knew in our time, but as well all Andalusia: an Andalusia selected and anthologized, distilled, filtrated, purified, I wish to say, *preserved*, like dried tunny in salt.' (Salt here has

a double meaning—wit and humour, as well as salt from the salt-flats of San Fernando.) 'The first cause of this Andalucismo is gaiety, which explains the vitality and eternal spring of Cádiz, that little girl who has just reached no less than her three-thousandth birthday. Andalus gaiety is facetious and ironic rather than rowdy, and it is called "guasa".'

Don G—— de las F—— told several 'delicious anecdotes' illustrating the 'guasa gaditana', so 'fine and with each passing year more skilful'.

There followed a history of the Carnaval and of the fiestas. Don G—— de las F—— put forward various theories as to their origin, and explained how the city of Cádiz had 'gaditanianized' their primitive and rural character. The orator then praised the Mayor, who, by organizing these fiestas, had shown himself to be a true heir to the wisdom and perspicacity accumulated during the three thousand years of his city's history.

He maintained that other features of Andalucismo are contention, argument and repartee. In Cádiz, where Andalusia is to be found in its quintessential state, 'la guasa' is even more graceful than elsewhere, and is called 'chufra'. The cante jondo has lost, in Cádiz, its subconscious, ancestral, Hebraic memory and, with the breeze from 'America, has been transformed into the 'Alegrías'. The guitar has been replaced by the handclap, which is the most metaphysical sound that exists, and by the castañuelas* which, as Martial affirms, are but two sea-shells echoing sounds of heaven (dos conchas de mar que repican a gloria). Therefore in Cádiz there is no room for naiveté and unrefined salt.

The orator proceeded then with 'innumerable jokes', including the one about the sailor from the Calle Asdrubal, who divided the world into three parts: 'Lo que é; lo que no é; y lo que a lo mejó é. (What it is; what it isn't; and what it probably is.)'

After paying tribute to the organizers, to the hundreds of anonymous workmen who built the floats, and to the girls who made the thousands of costumes, Don G—— de las F—— went into a tremendous peroration. He implored everyone who had contributed to the carnival, or would contribute to others in years to come, to keep the old songs—music that sets every Gaditano in the world a-tremble, no matter where he may be or what his condition—unadulterated by "mixtifications", modernisms, and "orfeonic" banalities (he meant schmaltzy choral harmonies). He ended with the cry "El Tanguillo, la chufra, el cantiño, and the Salt of Cádiz, by the Grace of God!'

This Pregón was greeted by deafening applause from every part of the Sessions Hall, galleries and adjacent courtyards and passages (a loudspeaker relayed his words to those outside), and the orator became

the subject of praise and popularity for many weeks afterwards.

There was a short speech by the Mayor; the Queen was crowned by the Marqués de V——; received presents—products of the land of the province; and was finally led on to the balcony to be shown to the people.

My attempts to watch all this were interrupted by my constantly being put to flight by various authorities.

Paul and myself found a space in the crowd in the Calle Ancha and waited comfortably for the approaching cavalcade. A stout man behind us, sitting in a wicker chair and wearing a Cordobés hat, got up and called a policeman. When the policeman came the man waved his finger in our direction.

'Oiga, Usté! Clear all this space in front of me, if you please. Clear it all away so that I can see.'

The policeman saluted and ushered us along. There was nowhere else to squeeze into, so we went off to a square and stood behind the crowd—in fact, some distance back from it. As the procession passed, the confetti-throwing became more and more vigorous, until veritable clouds of it were flying in all directions. A group of grey-coated policemen (the Armed Police)* hurried down to the crowd, and began pushing their way to the front.

An ancient Gaditano, toothless and lined, grinned at us wickedly.

'A political demonstration is arming itself with confetti!' he said slyly. 'A political demonstration with papelillos (confetti)!' He began to imitate the policeman. 'Oiga, Usté! Why did you throw that handful of papelillos so violently? Come here, you! What is your opinion of the Chief of State?'

He shuffled from one foot to the other, chuckling and cawing to himself like a hideous and obscene bird.

A girl was standing in front of us arm in arm with her mother, who, in her fur collar and black-feathered hat, looking the very picture of maternal protectiveness, turned on him with a freezing stare.

'Drunk. A man of your years. Right now you ought to be praying.'

'Yo? Tengo ma' año' que Cái. Ma' año 'que Cái tengo yo! (Me? I have more years than Cádiz. More years than Cádiz have I)'

We left him to his evil jokes, and followed the procession to the Town Hall. In between the floats marched the 'chirigótas', and around them capered heralds, giants, ghosts, and cabezudos—children wearing giant heads of grotesque and frightening appearance. The chirigótas were dressed as allegorical figures and performed antics suitable to their costumes. In addition to the bears, penguins, horse-guards and minstrels I have mentioned there were the 'Gypsy Grapple-hookers' (the allusion

is obvious), 'Emigrants', 'Thermometers', 'Soup and his Sons', 'The Lighthouse-keepers of Singapore', 'Lead Soldiers', 'Frogs', 'Motorists who have learned by Sad Experience', 'Children of the Pick-Up', 'Atomic Physicists', 'Men of Texas' and 'Apprentice Carpenters'—these last wheeling a bench, banging their fingers, holding up bleeding stumps of accidentally amputated hands, and dropping hammers on each other's feet.

That night four gypsies came into the café and danced 'chufas' for an hour and a half.

They were dressed as 'The Four Great Nations'—a Spaniard, a Frenchman, a Moor and an Englishman. The Spaniard was just himself. The Frenchman wore a beret, a filthy patched-up cloak, plus-fours (or rather trousers tucked under and held with string) and ballet shoes. The Moor was enveloped in sheets and carried a wooden curved sword. The Englishman wore a white topi of colonial vintage, cheeks painted vermilion red, a large yellow moustache, glasses upside-down, a blue jacket with a leather belt, faded brown shorts and tattered army boots.

The act was impromptu, but was based on a simple and very old Andalusian joke. The idea is that the Englishman sits at a table, quite unmoved and unimpressed by the flamenco dance of the others (who seem to be Spaniards again for the moment). Exasperated, they force a caña of the driest fino from Puerto de Santa María down his throat. Immediately he shuts his eyes, rocks to and fro and emits the purest, most 'castizo', cante jondo cry, wailing on and on till he almost bursts. Thereupon the Frenchman (reverted to type) wants to compete, the Moor becomes jealous and the 'chufas' begins. In a few moments the national identities are forgotten, and they dance until someone remembers it is time to collect money. Let no one smile at the apparent simplicity of all this until they have seen the dancing.

The 'Homanaje' (Homage) to Aurelio was a serious affair. It was financed by the State. The Gran Teatro Falla (a huge red-brick theatre named after the Gaditanian composer, Manuel de Falla) was reserved for one night; Aurelio had his photograph taken in his hat and cape, and it appeared on large pale blue posters displayed all over the city.

For several days Aurelio was in a state of increasing tension and excitement. On the morning of the homage he was in the Café Español, surrounded by well-wishers. He took a poster from the wall, signed it and gave it to me, to take back to England.

That night the theatre was packed. I had been unable to buy tickets, and Aurelio said I could watch from the wings.

Backstage was swarming with gypsies, who ran about like footpads and crowded the distinguished visitors and the artists who had come to perform. The first part (*literaria*) consisted of lectures, speeches and poems by Amós Rodríguez, by Dr. Venancio González García and, to crown the event, by the great José-María Pemán. Until the actual moment of curtain-rise all was shouting and chaos. Amós lost his temper completely (so I thought), waved his arms and cursed everybody in sight, until, catching the eye of someone beside me, he hid his face behind his hand and broke into a radiant and delighted giggle. This happened just at the moment that I was thinking, with satisfaction, how much more detached we are about these things in England.

The speeches, to northern ears, seemed interminable, but the *Gaditanos* shouted and applauded.

Don José-María Pemán was tall, with iron-grey hair, aquiline features, horn-rimmed glasses, a military bearing and an enormous and powerful smile.

When he walked on to the stage from the wings, holding a sheaf of papers in his hand, the talking, fidgeting and general noise in the theatre, which had continued throughout the speeches, subsided at last into silence. He read a poem, especially composed for the Homage, which praised Aurelio for his refusal to take part in the 'noisy nonsense' of show-business flamenco, and discoursed on the spirit of 'el cante', which was in its essence mysterious, tragic, 'black', almost evil, rather than gay, lively and spectacular. (Recently, as a sequel to this Homage, Aurelio has been decorated with 'La Cruz de Isobel la Católica' and has had a street named after him in Cádiz.)

Afterwards, there was a display of flamenco dancing by numerous gypsies and other inhabitants of the districts of Santa María and La Viña called 'Fiesta en el Barrio'. Then singers and dancers from other cities,* and a group from Madrid. Among the many guitarists, Efrén played as if possessed.

The third part was a recital of *Cante Grande* (Great Song) by Aurelio himself.

In the middle of the proceedings the police came in and threw all the gypsies out, and they threw me out with them by mistake.

I banged and shouted at the stage-door in vain for ten minutes before someone opened it and let me in.

Half an hour later the gypsies had somehow got in again, and were standing in dense groups in the wings so that the performers were unable to go on or off the stage.

The police came back and despite my desperate protests I was thrown out again.

'This way!' whispered the gypsies, and we ran round to a basement window which they forced open so quickly I could hardly see how they did it, and we were back in again.

I went straight to Aurelio's dressing-room and put on my overcoat.

'Where are you going?' shouted Aurelio, in his flowing cape, a bottle of Jerez in one hand and a caña in the other.

'Home,' I said. 'I've had enough of this!' I told him what had happened.

'Oh there, there, there, you're not going anywhere! Go back with this señor and he will protect you.'

He sent me off with a tall, stout and elderly gentleman, a matador of legendary fame whose name I have now forgotten, and under his bulk I took shelter for the rest of the Homage.

Aurelio was introduced at last by Amós, who sang some *Malagueñas* and *Soleares*, accompanied by El Moraito Chico (Purple Face the Younger—Juan, the brother of Manolo Moreno, of Jerez) and Efrén in turn. Efrén made one grinding mistake, and screwed up his face in a broad wink to El Moraito. But when Aurelio sang, greeted by a roar of applause, the mood of the people changed. It was so long since the mass of *Gaditanos* had heard Aurelio sing that his difficult art was quite unfamiliar to them, for popular tastes have changed over the years, and they were bewildered by it. There was a momentary silence at the end. The applause was scattered, and only gathered momentum when pride gained over aesthetic bafflement.

His art was not entirely unappreciated, however. Next morning, when I took a taxi to an appointment, the driver asked if I had been there. When I said yes, he answered: 'A revelation. Una cosa majestuosa, verdad? And how many had the faintest idea what they were listening to?'

For weeks afterwards people said: 'And who, out of all those guitarists of great category who came here, who played the truest flamenco? Our own Efrén! Our own Efrén Gris, of Cádiz!'